

The Lamp

February
2018
Edition

Grace Lutheran Church

Growing in Grace—Making Christ Known



Faith and Thomas the Tank Engine

Four year old Danny Williams has several great loves in his life besides Mom and Dad. There's Grandma and Grandpa Williams, apple sauce, Honey Nut Cheerios, red seedless grapes, and, of course, his grey blankie. There was one more great love —"Thomas the Tank Engine".

Not only was Thomas "must see T.V." but Danny has the engine with a number of Thomas' friends at home. His bedroom floor is covered with track, a roundhouse, train station, a coal dispenser, plus other engines in Thomas' life. Besides the track layout, Danny has DVD's, story books, and coloring books about Thomas.

One day Danny's mother Susan, learned that a real full-sized steaming smoking Thomas was coming to the Metra station in Joliet. It was to be only an hour stop. She quickly called the mother of Bennett, Danny's best buddy. They made plans to go and see this real live huffing, puffing blue-faced Thomas.

When the day came there they were, the two moms and the two boys standing on the platform in awe. This was not a little six inch toy, but the really huge smoking engine with the smiley face.

There stood the two boys in stunned silence with mouths and eyes wide open. The real Thomas the tank engine was right there before them. WOW! The moment of stunned silence was followed by loud squeals and shouts of excitement. The memories of that brief moment on a Thursday morning would last a lifetime.

What prepares you to encounter the real live embracing God who appears among us in Jesus Christ? So often we only know, or think we know, the small boxed-up god who comes packaged in creeds and catechisms. This is a god to play with on occasion and then put away for another time—a god we use as needed. It is no wonder that the god of our faith disappoints us when we try to push him around on our track.

The god we encounter in Jesus is so ungodly. Imagine for a moment a god who comes into this world as a helpless, powerless baby, born into a tradesman's family in an overcrowded house so that he's placed in a cattle feed trough. Then, he grows up in the small, no where town of Nazareth. Nothing ever happens in Nazareth. No one really cares about Nazareth. He grows up in the little place, the out of the way, side streets and towns that the really powerful and important people pass by. He is like a toy god that is used for a while then trashed (crucified) and thrown in a dump.

If that is where it all stops—in a dump, then what do you make of Easter. Is it all just a children's story? Or, perhaps just wishful thinking? But, imagine for a moment that the big huffing, puffing tank engine god becomes the small, on the bedroom floor god. He gets down on hands and knees to be with you where you live each day. He comes to you in the ordinary dreams and disappointments, joys and sorrows. He comes to you with all your faults and flaws as well as strengths and successes to simply say "I love you". Maybe faith is not a play thing, but the real life changing encounter with one who is truly God. And, if you should call him Thomas, that's okay too.

Live on,

Pastor David Vidler

In Our Prayers



Members: Marie Christian, Bonnie Hill, Jean Petersen, Elsie & Irving DeWald, Jean Goodwin, Ruth Chew, Rev. Guy Warke, Norma Siebring & Theresa Klager
Friends and Family of Grace: Linda Wilder (granddaughter of Marie Christian), Riley S. (prayers for a safe home), Ruth Boyer (friend of the Warkes),

Jeanne Kieffer (friend of the Warkes), Marilyn Butzow (friend of the Warkes),

Shirley Biernat (Marjorie Soda's mother), Jack Zdanowski (nephew of the Warkes),

Lori Domzalski (Nancy O'Brien's sister-in-law), Juanita (Jodi Dzak's mother),

Sarah Hazelrigg (granddaughter of Jean Petersen), Terry Wilder (Marie Christian's son-in-law),

Matt Prodehl (son-in-law of Dan Bell)

Home-bound: Andrew Nielsen (*Villa Franciscan Rehab* (Karen Nielsen's husband)), Dolly Hoover (*Sunny Hill, Joliet* (mother of Karen Nielsen)), Edie Hess (*Heritage Woods, Manteno*)

Serving in Armed Forces: Captain Erik Gundersen (Grandson of the Warkes)

Missionary for a Day ~ February 2018

02/01 Bruce & Dee Elsner

In Memory of Gloria Rempert

02/02 Gary Gruhn

Groudhog Day

02/08 Susan Trimby

In Celebration of Music and Choirs

02/16 Dave & Terry Phillips

In Memory of Mildred Phillips

02/20 Jim & Arlene Hankins

In Honor of their Wedding Anniversary

02/22 Frank & Doris Dickey Jr.

In Honor of Frank's Birthday

Birthdays—February 2018

02/04 Norma Siebring

02/06 Michael Soda

02/08 Susan Trimby

02/09 Marjorie Soda

02/11 Christopher Tidmore

02/15 Nancy O'Brien

02/18 John Filas

02/19 Jacob Long

02/22 Frank Dickey, Jr.

02/22 Jessica Elsner

02/22 Lori Quigley

02/23 Scott Soda

02/24 Stan Long

02/26 Jim Hankins

02/27 Marlene Brusa

02/28 Barbara Kirstein

Anniversaries ~ February 2018

02/04 Pr. C. David & Adrienne Vidler

02/09 Scott & Marjorie Soda

02/20 Jim & Arlene Hankins

**Pastor's Report
to
Grace Lutheran, Wilmington**

Date: Nov. 29 - Dec. 27/17

Hospital Calls: 2

Pastoral Calls: 20

Evangelism Calls: 6

Meetings: 3

Worship Services: 9

Bible Studies: 0

Confirmation Classes: 0

Private Communion: 3

Synod Meetings: 1 @ St. John, JoLiET

Mileage: 354

Miscellaneous: _____
 Lois, Jason, Autumn DomzalSKI - Dec. 10
 BAPTISMS -- 4 AVA LENART - Dec. 24
 Adult Member - 1 - ALICIA LENART
 FUNERALS -- 0
 Diaconia Class - 3 @ St. John - JoLiET

Grace Lutheran Church Council Meeting at Hayden's Crossing
 December 10, 2017

Present Council Members: Regina Bauer, Dianne Carr, Jessica Elsner, Dave Phillips, Joshua Wilkes, and two guests.

Opening Devotions: David P. opened with prayer.

Minutes of November Council Meeting
 Minutes reviewed and approved, motion made by Regina and seconded by Josh, all in favor.

No other business conducted.

Next Council Meeting January 14, 2018

Respectfully submitted,
 Dave Phillips

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday on February 14th (Valentine's Day) with worship at 7:00p.m. The worship will include the marking with ashes on the forehead or palm of the hand as well as coming to the Lord's table. The six Wednesdays of Lent, February 14, 21, 28, and March 7u, 14, 21 we'll also provide a "Soup-Supper" at 6:00-6:45p.m. The supper will be sponsored by the Youth and Confirmation groups. The mid-week Lenten theme will be "Signs on the Road of Life".



Generosity Sunday—30 Hour Famine

Generosity Sunday will be held on February 4th. The Youth will be gathering on Saturday to hold their 30 hours of fasting, while raising money for this very worthy cause.

Every year, hundreds of thousands of students in the U.S. — and thousands more around the world — unite through World Vision's 30 Hour Famine to feed hungry children and families.

Students will grow closer to Christ and each other as they fast together for 30 hours and raise funds to fight hunger. What's more, when you do the Famine you're challenging students to be part of something bigger than themselves. To take action for God's kingdom. To help save the lives of hungry kids. To permanently change the way students see the world.

Help! Help!

Our volunteer lists are getting skimpy!

We have an opportunity for you to help as a liturgist, a communion assistant, a lector, a greeter, or an usher. Even if you don't know how, Grace will be holding instructional meetings on a Sunday (after church) for each of these positions. It is guaranteed, you will get more out of this than you put in. Please sign up on the attendance sheet.



CRE is scheduled for March 10th

The Congregational Resourcing Event will be held at Kishwaukee Community College in Malta, IL. Sponsored by the Northern Illinois Synod Congregational Life Committee, the CRE is one of the synod's finest yearly events. Church council members, teachers, musicians, staff, volunteers, and leaders - just about everyone in a congregation - can take advantage of this learning event to strengthen skills, gather resources, network with others, and discover new ways to enhance congregational and individual ministries. ALL sign-ups need to be done BY MARCH 1ST. You can register online if you wish to attend, or let the office know.